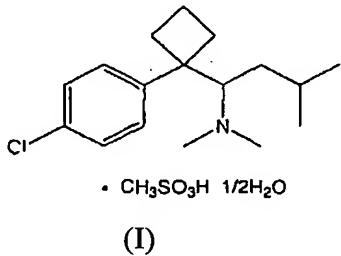


In the Claims:

-- Claim 1. (Original) A pharmaceutical composition for treating or preventing obesity, comprising the crystalline sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate of formula (I).



-- Claim 2. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein the 2θ values of the major peaks in the X-ray diffraction spectrum of the crystalline sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate are:

8.2±0.2, 10.8±0.2, 11.7±0.2, 12.0±0.2, 12.3±0.2, 15.8±0.2, 16.4±0.2, 17.4±0.2,
17.4±0.2, 17.8±0.2, 19.0±0.2, 21.2±0.2, 21.9±0.2, 22.2±0.2, 22.8±0.2, 23.3±0.2,
24.4±0.2, 24.9±0.2, 25.3±0.2, 25.6±0.2 and 26.8±0.2.

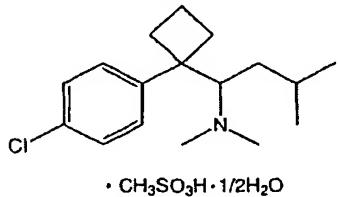
-- Claim 3. (Amended) The pharmaceutical composition of ~~claim 1 or 2~~ claim 1, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient.

-- Claim 4. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein the crystalline sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate of formula (I) is present in an amount ranging from 1 to 50mg.

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-- Claim 5. (Original) The crystalline sibutramine

methanesulfonate hemihydrate of formula (I).



(I)

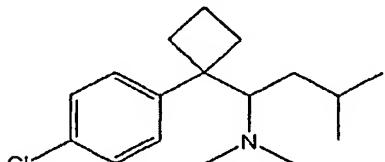
-- Claim 6. (Original) The crystalline sibutramine

methanesulfonate hemihydrate of formula (I) of claim 5, of which the 2θ values of the major peaks in the X-ray diffraction spectrum are:

8.2±0.2, 10.8±0.2, 11.7±0.2, 12.0±0.2, 12.3±0.2, 15.8±0.2, 16.4±0.2, 17.4±0.2,
17.4±0.2, 17.8±0.2, 19.0±0.2, 21.2±0.2, 21.9±0.2, 22.2±0.2, 22.8±0.2, 23.3±0.2,
24.4±0.2, 24.9±0.2, 25.3±0.2, 25.6±0.2 and 26.8±0.2.

-- Claim 7. (Amended) A method of preparing the crystalline

sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate according to ~~claim 5 or 6~~ claim 5, which comprises reacting sibutramine of formula (II) with methanesulfonic acid dissolved in a mixture of an organic solvent and water.



(II)

-- Claim 8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein

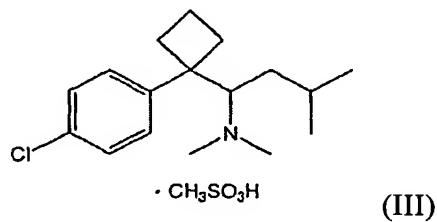
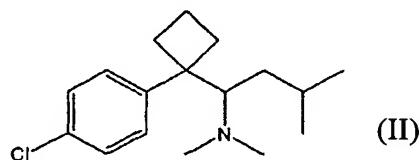
methanesulfonic acid is employed in an amount ranging from 1 to 2 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of sibutramine of formula (II).

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-- Claim 9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein water is employed in an amount ranging from 0.5 to 5 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of sibutramine of formula (II).

-- Claim 10. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the organic solvent is an ester selected from the group consisting of ethyl acetate, n-propyl acetate, isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate; an ether selected from the group consisting of diethyl ether, diisopropyl ether and t-butyl methyl ether; a ketone selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl ketone; or a mixture thereof.

-- Claim 11. (Amended) A method of preparing the crystalline sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate according to ~~claim 5 or 6~~ claim 5, which comprises (i) reacting sibutramine of formula (II) with methanesulfonic acid in an anhydrous organic solvent to obtain anhydrous sibutramine methanesulfonate of formula (III); and (ii) bringing the sibutramine methanesulfonate of formula (III) into contact with water in an organic solvent.



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-- Claim 12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein methanesulfonic acid is employed in an amount ranging from 1 to 2 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of sibutramine of formula (II).

-- Claim 13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein water is employed in an amount ranging from 0.5 to 5 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of anhydrous sibutramine methanesulfonate of formula (III).

-- Claim 14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the anhydrous organic solvent of step (i) is an ester selected from the group consisting of ethyl acetate, n-propyl acetate, isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate; a ketone solvent selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl ketone and methyl isobutyl ketone; an ether selected from the group consisting of ethyl ether, isopropyl ether and t-butyl methyl ether; toluene; or a mixture thereof.

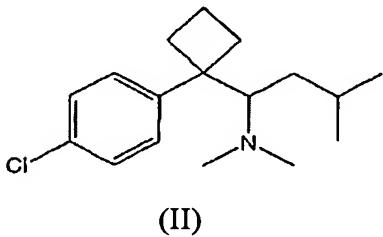
-- Claim 15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the organic solvent of step (ii) is an ester selected from the group consisting of ethyl acetate, n-propyl acetate, isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate; an ether selected from the group consisting of diethyl ether, diisopropyl ether and t-butyl methyl ether; a ketone selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl ketone and methyl isobutyl ketone; or a mixture thereof.

-- Claim 16. (New) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 2, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient.

-- Claim 17. (New) A method of preparing the crystalline sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate according to claim 6, which comprises

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reacting sibutramine of formula (II) with methanesulfonic acid dissolved in a mixture of an organic solvent and water.



-- Claim 18. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein methanesulfonic acid is employed in an amount ranging from 1 to 2 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of sibutramine of formula (II).

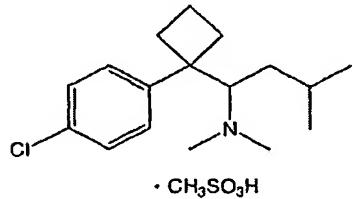
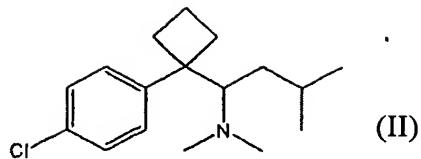
-- Claim 19. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein water is employed in an amount ranging from 0.5 to 5 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of sibutramine of formula (II).

-- Claim 20. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the organic solvent is an ester selected from the group consisting of ethyl acetate, n-propyl acetate, isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate; an ether selected from the group consisting of diethyl ether, diisopropyl ether and t-butyl methyl ether; a ketone selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl ketone; or a mixture thereof.

-- Claim 21. (New) A method of preparing the crystalline sibutramine methanesulfonate hemihydrate according to claim 6, which comprises (i) reacting sibutramine of formula (II) with methanesulfonic acid in an anhydrous organic solvent to obtain anhydrous sibutramine methanesulfonate of formula (III); and (ii) bringing the sibutramine methanesulfonate of formula (III) into contact with water in an

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organic solvent.



(III)

-- Claim 22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein
methanesulfonic acid is employed in an amount ranging from 1 to 2 mole equivalents,
based on 1 mole of sibutramine of formula (II).

-- Claim 23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein water is
employed in an amount ranging from 0.5 to 5 mole equivalents, based on 1 mole of
anhydrous sibutramine methanesulfonate of formula (III).

-- Claim 24. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the
anhydrous organic solvent of step (i) is an ester selected from the group consisting of
ethyl acetate, n-propyl acetate, isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate; a ketone solvent
selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl ketone and methyl isobutyl
ketone; an ether selected from the group consisting of ethyl ether, isopropyl ether and t-
butyl methyl ether; toluene; or a mixture thereof.

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-- Claim 25. (New)

The method of claim 21, wherein the organic solvent of step (ii) is an ester selected from the group consisting of ethyl acetate, n-propyl acetate, isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate; an ether selected from the group consisting of diethyl ether, diisopropyl ether and t-butyl methyl ether; a ketone selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl ketone and methyl isobutyl ketone; or a mixture thereof.